

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8300

INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 02368

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, RH

SUBJECT: BRITISH VIEW OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONSULTATIONS  
ON RHODESIA

1. EMBOFF HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS IN  
SOUTHERN AFRICA WITH ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
AT FCO NORMAN ASPIN AND ACTING HEAD RHODESIA DEPARTMENT  
AT FCO PETER BARLOW IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS ON FEBRUARY

13. BRITISH INFORMATION IS THAT SMITH AND ANC REPS ARE  
STILL DISCUSSING MODALITIES FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CONFER-  
ENCE AND HAVE NOT YET BROACHED SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS  
CONCERNING MAJORITY RULE. ASPIN REITERATED THAT AS FAR AS  
BRITISH CONCERNED, ONLY POSSIBLE SITE FOR CONFERENCE THAT  
WOULD BE REJECTED OUT OF HAND IS UK. REASON IS THAT  
SHOULD SMITH OR OTHER OFFICIAL FROM REBEL RHODESIAN GOV-  
ERNMENT COME TO UK, HE WOULD BE LIABLE TO PRIVATE PROSE-  
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CUTION FOR TREASON. WHILE BRITISH WOULD NOT WANT PARTI-

CIPATE IN CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN RHODESIA, THEY WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM IN GIVING NECESSARY LEGAL APPROVAL TO ANY AGREEMENT SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES EVEN IF SUCH AGREEMENT REACHED DURING CONFERENCES IN RHODESIA.

2. FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REPORT FROM BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LUSAKA OF HIGH COMMISSIONER'S MEETING WITH ANC VICE PRESIDENT GABELLAH (LUSAKA 249), FCO CONCERNED OVER POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED SPLIT IN ANC DUE TO ZANU'S MACHINATIONS. IN THIS REGARD ASPIN SAID SITHOLE'S DISCLOSURE OF MULLER VISIT TO PRESS IS EVIDENCE OF HIS HOSTILITY TO NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT. BRITISH BELIEVE SITHOLE AND OTHER ZANU LEADERS CONVINCED CEASE-FIRE FOLLOWED BY PERIOD OF PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE UNFAVORABLE TO ZANU BECAUSE ZANU LEADERS WOULD BE UNABLE TO MAINTAIN MOTIVATION OF THEIR FIGHTING ELEMENTS IN SUCH A SITUATION AND ZANU POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN RHODESIA STILL RUDIMENTARY. ZAPU ON OTHER HAND SUPPORTING PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS BECAUSE ITS FIGHTING FORCES HAVE BEEN INEFFECTIVE FOR SOME TIME, BUT ITS POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN RHODESIA OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE.

3. COMMENT: FCO REMAINS FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS THUS FAR HAS PROVEN CORRECT. THEY PARTICULARLY CONTENT WITH THEIR REFUSAL TO SUCCUMB TO AFRICAN PRESSURES AND CALL A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE AND REMAIN UNCONVINCED BY AFRICAN ARGUMENT THAT ONLY WAY TO GET SMITH TO MAKE NECESSARY COMPROMISES IS BY CALLING SUCH A CONFERENCE. BRITISH, OF COURSE, BELIEVE SMITH WOULD NOT HAVE ANY REASON TO PARTICIPATE AND WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT INVITATION FROM THEM. PREMATURE CALLING OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE WOULD LEAD TO BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS, AND RETURN TO PROTRACTED GUERRILLA WAR. END COMMENT. SPIERS

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